

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 WARSAW 8844

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PL
SUBJECT: POLAND: LOOKING BACK AND AHEAD

REF: WARSAW 8477 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION IN THE WEST THAT
POLAND'S DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES HAVE LED THE GIEREK LEADERSHIP
TO TIGHTEN UP, TO ADOPT TOUGHER INTERNAL POLICIES, AND TO PULL
BACK FROM THE MORE WESTERLY ECONOMIC COURSE IT HAS FOLLOWED IN
RECENT YEARS. THE APPOINTMENT OF SZYDLAK AND KEPA, KNOWN AS
HARDLINERS, AS VICE PREMIERS HAS BEEN CITED AS EVIDENCE OF THIS.
A SOVIET POLITICAL PRICE TAG FOR RECENT ECONOMIC RELIEF
TO POLAND HAS ALSO BEEN DISCUSSED. I DISAGREE WITH THESE
GUESSES. RATHER THAN REACTING IN A REPRESSIVE
MANNER TO WORKER UNHAPPINESS, GIEREK HAS, IN MY
OPINION, TRIED TO DEEPEN AND EXTEND HIS COMMITMENT TO
THE CONSUMERISM WHICH HAS BEEN THE HALLMARK OF HIS
REGIME THUS FAR. IF THIS IS TRUE, I BELIEVE HE HAS
CHOSEN THE BEST OF THE LIMITED POLICY OPTIONS BEFORE
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HIM, AND I AM NOW SLIGHTLY MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HIS

CHANCES OF AVOIDING A POPULAR EXPLOSION, AT LEAST
IN THE SHORT RUN. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING A CONVERSATION DECEMBER 10. CARDINAL
WYSZYNSKI TOLD ME, "OUR GENTLEMEN (HIS USUAL, SLIGHTLY
SARDONIC, TERM FOR THE PZPR LEADERSHIP) WANTED TO DO
TOO MUCH TOO FAST. IT IS MUCH BETTER TO MAKE PROGRESS
MORE SLOWLY, BUT STEADILY. WE (I.E., MEN OF THE
CLOTH) LEARNED THAT LONG AGO."

3. NOW THAT GIEREK HAS MADE HIS SOVIET VISIT AND
HAS SKETCHED OUT HIS NEW POLICY TO THE PARTY, THE
SEJM, AND THE POLISH PEOPLE, WE CAN SEE A LITTEL MORE
CLEARLY THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THE POLISH LEADERSHIP
WOULD LIKE TO GO IN THE MONTHS AHEAD. WE ARE ALSO BETTER
ABLE TO ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISIONS ANNOUNCED
OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS.

4. WORKER REJECTION OF LAST JUNE'S PRICE INCREASES
LEFT THE GIEREK LEADERSHIP DEEPLY SHAKEN. ITS
REPUTATION ABROAD WAS TARNISHED AND ITS AUTHORITY AT
HOME SEVERELY COMPROMISED. THE ESSENTIAL CHOICE
FACING THE FIRST SECRETARY AND HIS TEAM, AS FLORA
LEWIS PUT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES (SEPTEMBER 24, 1976),
WAS WHETHER "TO OPEN UP CONSIDERABLY MORE AND GIVE MORE
SATISFACTION TO THE PEOPLE, OR TRY TO CRACK DOWN
WITHOUT EXPLODING." RECENT INDICATIONS POINT TO A
CONTINUATION OF THE REGIME'S POLICIES OF CONSUMERISM
AND INDUSTRIAL MODERNIZATION, SPICED WITH A NEW
EMPHASIS ON THE ROLE OF PRIVATE INITIATIVE IN SERVICES
AND SMALL INDUSTRY AND REASSURANCES TO POLAND'S
FARMERS. TO BE SURE, THE REGIME IS TAKING NO CHANCES
ON LOSING ITS GRIP, BUT THE POLICY MIX WE SEE
EMERGING IS ONE IN WHICH CONTINUITY PREDOMINATES OVER
CHANGE. ENLARGED SCOPE FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE HAS
BEEN FOLDED IN AS PERHAPS THE ONLY FEASIBLE WAY OF
OILING THE GEARS OF THE POLISH ECONOMY WITH
WAGE-AND-GOODS INCENTIVES IN THE SHORT TERM. GIEREK
IS BUYING TIME IN THE HOPE THAT BETTER HARVESTS, HIGHER
PRODUCTIVITY, AND WESTERN RECOVERY MAY GET HIS
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ORIGINAL STRATEGY BACK ON THE TRACK. THIS CONSTITUTES
A SIMPLE RECOGNITION THAT NO SURE AND SHORT ROUTE
OUT OF POLAND'S CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS EXISTS. THE
LEADERSHIP SEEMS TO BE SELECTING THE LEAST DANGEROUS OF
THE FEW AVAILABLE OPTIONS.

5. THE FINANCIAL TIMES STORY ON THE ONE-BILLION RUBLE
CREDIT (STATE 286514) WAS PROBABLY BASED ON AN

AUTHORITATIVE, LEAK FROM A HIGHLY PLACED POLISH SOURCE. (IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO READ WHAT JAROSZEWICZ TOLD DAVID LASCELLES DECEMBER 10 ON THE RECORD). IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW MUCH OF THIS ASSISTANCE WILL BE IN THE FORM OF INCREASED SHIPMENTS OF GRAIN, PETROLEUM, AND OTHER COMMODITIES AND HOW MUCH WILL REPRESENT A REDUCTION IN POLISH SHIPMENTS TO THE USSR OF ITEMS NEEDED AT HOME TO MEET CONSUMER DEMAND (STATE 300349). THERE IS CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE (WARSAW 8840) THAT, FOLLOWING THE JUNE EVENTS, POLAND CUT BACK ITS EXPORTS TO THE SOVIET UNION. BUT THIS ECONOMIC-ASSISTANCE PACKAGE WAS PRESUMABLY AGREED TO WELL BEFORE GIEREK ARRIVED IN MOSCOW, DURING THE EARLIER VISIT (OR VISITS) BY JAROSZEWICZ.

6. THE PRINCIPAL ACHIEVEMENT OF GIEREK'S VISIT WAS OBTAINING GENERAL SOVIET APPROVAL FOR THE POST-JUNE POLICY WORKED OUT BY HIS COLLEAGUES AND HIM. THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO HAVE TOLD GIEREK TO DO WHATEVER HE AND THE POLISH LEADERSHIP AGREED WAS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO KEEP THE LID ON IN POLAND, SO LONG AS IT DOES NOT ENDANGER SOVIET AND WARSAW PACT SECURITY INTERESTS.

7. THIS ALSO HELPS EXPLAIN WHY REPRESENTATIVES OF POLAND'S TWO MINOR POLITICAL PARTIES WERE PART OF GIEREK'S DELEGATION TO THE USSR. THEY WERE INCLUDED IN AN EFFORT TO CONVINCE PRIVATE POLISH FARMERS, ARTISANS, AND SERVICE-INDUSTRY OPERATORS THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S EMPHASIS ON PRIVATE ACTIVITY IS PERMANENT AND THAT THEY CAN SAFELY AND PROFITABLY EXPAND EXISTING ACTIVITIES AND BEGIN NEW ONES. SOVIET OFFICIALS WERE QUICK TO POINT OUT TO US IN WARSAW THAT MOSCOW'S RECEPTION OF THIS MULTI-PARTY DELEGATION CONSTITUTED

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FORMAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE "PLURALISM" OF THE POLISH POLITICAL SYSTEM. WHAT THE SOVIETS REALLY WERE ACKNOWLEDGING WAS AN INCREASE IN THE PLURALISM OF THE POLISH ECONOMIC SYSTEM.

8. ON NOVEMBER 5, BEFORE THE TRIP TO THE SOVIET UNION, THERE WAS AN UNUSUAL JOINT MEETING OF THE GOVERNMENT PRESIDUM, THE PZPR POLITBIURO, AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, DURING WHICH AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON A PROGRAM TO REGULATE TAXES AND ENSURE SUPPLIES OF RAW MATERIALS AND MACHINERY TO PRIVATE BUSINESSES. AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, VARIOUS PZPR LEADERS TALKED PUBLICLY ABOUT INCREASING THE SIZE OF FARMS IN PRIVATE HANDS AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF POLAND'S LARGE

PRIVATE-AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. WHAT GIEREK NEEDED BEFORE BEING MORE EXPLICIT WAS SOME MARK OF SOVIET APPROVAL FOR WHAT COULD BE CRITICIZED BY SOME IN MOSCOW AND IN OTHER WARSAW PACT CAPITALS AS AN EVEN MORE HERETICAL COURSE OF ACTION THAN THAT HITHERTO PURSUED IN POLAND, WITH ITS ALREADY LARGE PRIVATE SECTOR. CLEARLY, HE RECEIVED THIS IN MOSCOW.

9. UPON HIS RETURN FROM MOSCOW, GIEREK MOVED QUICKLY AND ADROITLY TO MAKE THE FIRST OF THE PERSONNEL CHANGES WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO CARRY THE PARTY THROUGH THE CURRENT TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, ROUGHLY THE NEXT EIGHTEEN MONTHS TO TWO YEARS, DURING WHICH HE HOPES TO OVERCOME THE EFFECTS OF THE JUNE, 1976, DISASTER AND BRING POLAND BACK ONTO THE TRACK ON WHICH IT WAS IN THE FIRST THREE-TO-FOUR YEARS OF HIS FIRST SECRETARYSHIP.

10. IT HAD BEEN WIDELY HOPED ON THE LIBERAL, "WESTERNIZING" SIDE OF THE POLISH ESTABLISHMENT THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OF THESE PERSONNEL CHANGES WOULD BE THE ELEVATION OF JAROSZEWICZ TO CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, WITH ALL THE ENCOMIUMS DUE TO SO WORTHY A VETERAN OF POLAND'S POLITICAL UPS-AND-DOWNS. THAT WAS NOT DONE (WARSAW 8486). THESE LIBERALS CONTINUE TO HOPE. THEY BELIEVE THAT JAROSZEWICZ WILL BE REMOVED "ONCE THE DUST HAS SETTLED," I.E., SOME TIME THIS COMING SPRING OR
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SUMMER. (AMONG THESE PEOPLE, "OPTIMISTS" FORESEE JAROSZEWICZ'S REMOVAL IN MARCH; "PESSIMISTS" SAY IT WON'T HAPPEN UNTIL SUMMER.)

11. WHATEVER JAROSZEWICZ'S FATE TURNS OUT TO BE, GIEREK HAS RESTORED OLSZOWSKI TO THE SECRETARIAT AND GIVEN HIM THE MAKE-OR-BREAK RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERSEEING THE POLITICO-ECONOMIC NEXUS AT WHICH THE SYSTEM NEARLY BLEW UP LAST JUNE. OLSZOWSKI IS NO ECONOMIST.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 WARSAW 8844

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SO MUCH THE BETTER, SAY THE WARSAW CAFE COMMENTATORS;
WE NEED SOMEONE TO KEEP THOSE TECHNOCRATS FROM REALIZING
MICHAL KALECKI'S PROPHECY: "NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO I
WAS SHOWN A WORKING PAPER SETTING THE SHARE OF INVEST-
MENT IN NATIONAL INCOME WITH THE AIM OF MAXIMIZING
TOTAL CONSUMPTION FOR THE LONG-RANGE PLAN PERIOD.
THROUGH MATHEMATICAL ANALYSIS THE METHOD OFFERED NOT
TOO ATTRACTIVE RESULTS: IT SHOWED THAT FOR A TWENTY-
YEAR PERIOD PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENTS SHOULD CONSTITUTE
ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF NATIONAL INCOME. THIS IS NOT EVEN
AS BIZARRE AS IT MIGHT APPEAR; A HIGH SHARE OF
PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENTS IN NATIONAL INCOME ALLOWS FOR
ITS HIGH RATE OF GROWTH AND THIS SO RAISES ITS LEVEL
IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS OF THE LONG-RANGE PLAN, THAT
CONSUMPTION NOT ONLY IN THOSE YEARS, BUT EVEN FOR THE
ENTIRE PERIOD OF THE PLAN IS HIGHER THAN WITH A LOWER
SHARE OF INVESTMENT IN NATIONAL INCOME. BUT THAT
WHICH IS COMPREHENSIBLE IS NOT ALWAYS REASONABLE: EVEN
IF ONE WOULD NOT BE CONCERNED WITH THE SUFFERING OF
THE UNFORTUNATE POPULATION IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE
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LONG-TERM PLAN, ONE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT
THAT, WITH THE ASSUMED STANDARD OF LIVING, THIS
POPULATION WOULD SOON PERISH, AND THUS WOULD BE
UNABLE TO FULFILL THE PLAN" (PAGES 706-708, "AKUMULACJA
A MAKSYMALIZACJA SPOZYCIA," EKONOMISTA, WARSAW, NO. 3,
1962; TRANSLATED AND QUOTED IN GEORGE R. FEIWEL, "THE
INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL OF MICHAL KALECKI: A STUDY IN

ECONOMIC THEORY AND POLICY", KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE, 1975, PAGE 328).

12. THIS IS A MAKE-OR-BREAK ASSIGNMENT FOR OLSZOWSKI, WHOM GIEREK REMOVED FROM THE SECRETARIAT FIVE YEARS AGO BECAUSE HE WAS TOO THREATENING A POTENTIAL RIVAL. (FOR THREE OF THOSE FIVE YEARS, WARSAW NEWSPAPER EDITORS, MOST OF THEM OLSZOWSKI'S APPOINTEES AND STRONG ADMIRERS, HAD AN INSTRUCTION FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE NOT TO PRINT OLSZOWSKI'S NAME ON THEIR FRONT PAGES. HIS TITLE COULD BE USED, BUT WITHOUT THE NAME, WHICH COULD ONLY BE PUBLISHED INSIDE THE PAPER). IN HIS ROLE AS FOREIGN MINISTER, OLSZOWSKI PROVED HIMSELF A SELF-EFFACING, LOYAL SUPPORTER OF THE FIRST SECRETARY. HE MADE GIEREK'S "WESTPOLITIK" WORK. BY GENERAL CONSENSUS AMONG THOSE WHO KNOW THESE PEOPLE AND CAN MAKE COMPARISONS, HE IS THE MOST INTELLIGENT MEMBER OF THE POLITIBIURO. HE BRINGS TO HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT GREAT FLEXIBILITY AND A GREAT DEAL OF EXPERIENCE AS A DIPLOMAT, TOGETHER WITH HIS EARLIER EXPERIENCE AS A POLITICAL MOBILIZER (WHEN HE WAS HEAD OF THE UNION OF POLISH YOUTH AFTER THE POLISH OCTOBER OF 1956) AND PROPAGANDIST. HIS QUALIFICATIONS ARE THUS FIRST-RATE. HE NOW CONFRONTS AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TASK. HE IS BEING ASKED TO MAKE BRICKS WITH ONLY THE BAREST MINIMUM OF STRAW. IF HE SUCCEEDS, HE IS A GOOD BET TO FOLLOW GIEREK AS FIRST SECRETARY, ALL OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL. IF HE FAILS, HE WILL NO DOUBT BE APPOINTED A VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, LIKE THOSE OTHER "FORMER PEOPLE," FRANCISZEK SZLACHCIC, JAN SZYDLAK, AND JOZEF KEPA.

13. ON HIS RETURN FROM MOSCOW, GIEREK ALSO WENT FURTHER THAN AT ANY TIME IN RECENT MEMORY IN GIVING
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PRIVATE FARMERS ASSURANCES ABOUT THEIR FUTURE. THEN CAME HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, ESPECIALLY IN THE SERVICES SECTOR. WITHOUT BREZHNEV'S HAND FIGURATIVELY ON HIS SHOULDER, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE COULD HAVE MADE SUCH STATEMENTS AND HAD THEM REPEATED AND EXPANDED ON BY JAROSZEWICZ IN AN IMPORTANT POLICY SPEECH TO THE SEJM SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DECEMBER 1-2 PLENUM OF THE PZPR CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

14. WE SEE NO BASIS FOR THE SPECULATION THAT THE PRICE GIEREK PAID FOR SOVIET ASSISTANCE WAS GREATER CONFORMITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GREATER INTEGRATION OF THE POLISH ECONOMY INTO CEMA. THE

PRINCIPAL PRICE GIEREK WAS ASKED TO PAY WAS THE SAME ONE HE HAS BEEN ASKED TO PAY FOR MANY YEARS-- MAINTAINING TRANQUILITY IN POLAND. THE POLES ALREADY COMPLY FULLY WITH THE MAIN LINES OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY, AND HAVE FOR YEARS. POLAND HAS ALWAYS FELT IT HAD A GOOD BARGAIN IN TRADING SUBSERVIENCE IN FOREIGN POLICY FOR RELATIVE INDEPENDENCE IN DOMESTIC POLICY.

15. THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE AN INCREASE IN THE SHARE OF POLISH TRADE CONDUCTED WITHIN CEMA, BUT THIS GROWTH WILL RESULT MOSTLY FROM THE TRIMMING OF POLAND'S EXCESSIVE IMPORTS FROM THE WEST AND FROM SHIPMENTS OF THE PROMISED SOVIET ASSISTANCE, RATHER THAN FROM INCREASED POLISH INVOLVEMENT IN CEMA INTEGRATION. AMBASSADOR TRAMPCZYNSKI SAYS THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN PUSHING ECONOMIC INTEGRATION FOR 25 YEARS, AND THERE ARE STILL ONLY FOUR POLISH-SOVIET JOINT-INVESTMENT PROJECTS, TWO OF WHICH HE NEGOTIATED FOR POLAND MANY YEARS AGO.

16. OLSZOWSKI TOLD ME ON DECEMBER 6 THAT POLAND NEEDS ABOUT TWO YEARS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY. GIEREK WILL HAVE TO HAVE THE COOPERATION OF POLAND'S WORKERS SINCE THE MOSCOW VISIT INDICATES CLEARLY THAT HE IS TRYING TO ATTAIN THAT COOPERATION BY INDUCEMENT, RATHER THAN BY FIAT. I SEE SOME POSSIBILITY FOR LIMITE SUCCESS, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT
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RUN. LONGER-RANGE SUCCESS WILL DEPAND ON HOW WELL GIEREK'S STRATEGY OF HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY, MORE CONSUMERISM, AND INCREASED EXPORTS TO THE WEST FARES. ON THAT, WE MUST RESERVE JUDGEMENT.

17. AFTER MONTHS OF SHOCK AND DITHERING, THE POLISH LEADERSHIP, UNDER GIEREK'S DIRECTION, HAS GOTTEN A GRIP ON ITSELF AND BROUGHT FORWARD A NEW POLICY INITIATIVE, BUILT LARGELY OUT OF THE OLD POLICY, PLUS A SUBSTANTIAL HELPING OF SOVIET MATERIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT. EACH SUCCESSIVE SHOCK PUSHES THE LEADERSHIP FURTHER IN THE DIRECTION OF ADOPTING THE BASIC GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY MICHAL KALECKI IN HIS CLASSIC FIFTEEN-YEAR PERSPECTIVE PLAN, REJECTED IN THE LATTER 1950'S. THE FIRST REQUIREMENT IS THAT THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE POLISH WORKER AND PEASANT SHOULD CONTINUE TO RISE. CENTRAL PLANNERS CAN ALWAYS FIND A WAY OF SPOILING ANY PROSPECT OF IMPROVEMENT. PERHAPS THIS TIME THE LESSON HAS BEEN LEARNED?
DAVIES

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